

ARTISTS
OF THE LYME ART
ASSOCIATION



FROM CHILDE HASSAM
AND WILLIAM ROBINSON
TO GERSHON CAMASSAR



Childe Hassam, photograph courtesy of Lyme Art Association Archives

FRONT COVER

Willard Metcalf (1858-1925)

Mountain Laurel, 1905

Oil on canvas, 29 x 26 in.

Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection

New Britain Museum of American Art

A R T I S T S
O F T H E L Y M E A R T
A S S O C I A T I O N

S E L E C T I O N S F R O M *NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART*
KENNETH L. AUSTIN AND E. JANE AUSTIN COLLECTION
LYME ART ASSOCIATION PERMANENT COLLECTION

A N D *PRIVATE COLLECTIONS*

KATHLEEN KIENHOLZ Curator

LYME ART ASSOCIATION · OLD LYME · CONNECTICUT
OCTOBER 23 TO DECEMBER 22 · 1998

F R O M C H I L D E H A S S A M
A N D W I L L I A M R O B I N S O N
T O G E R S H O N C A M A S S A R

FOREWORD

The Lyme Art Association, the oldest continuous art colony in America, and the New Britain Museum of American Art, the first museum in the country to be devoted exclusively to the nation's art, with additional support from private collectors, are pleased to jointly present this exhibition of Old Lyme artists.

Connecticut can take pride in its place in American art history, having nurtured creativity from Colonial times to the present day. Our artists have often *thrived* best in art colonies such as the one at the Florence Griswold house in Old Lyme; they have *succeeded* when they have had the opportunity to exhibit together, as they have done at the Lyme Art Association over many decades; and their work has *remained vital* for future generations when it has been collected by individuals and museums. Thanks to the wisdom of the trustees of the New Britain Museum of American Art, its collection is rich in the work of the Old Lyme artists.

Merja Lehtinen
Executive Director
Lyme Art Association
Old Lyme, Connecticut

Laurene Buckley
Director
New Britain Museum of American Art
New Britain, Connecticut

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The generosity of the New Britain Museum of American Art and its staff, led by director Laurene Buckley, is deeply appreciated. By allowing us to borrow some highly selective works from its collection, the museum has greatly enhanced our exhibition. Laurene Buckley contributed much time and effort to the various drafts of the text, and the polished quality of the catalogue is due in no small part to her input.

Special thanks are due to Arlene Camassar Mandel for providing insights into her late husband's character and work. I am also extremely obligated to Todd Camassar for providing inestimable information on his grandfather. Lorene Camassar also shared generously stories of her father. Camassar family members graciously lent works.

We are grateful to Kenneth L. and F. Jane Austin, the lenders of the Robinson Collection which has not been publicly exhibited in over half a century.

I would like to offer many thanks to the Lyme Art Association, its executive director Merja Lehtinen, artist member Nelson H. White, and the members who commissioned and published this catalogue, and the Essex Savings Bank which provided funding for the exhibition and curatorial research.

Finally, thanks are due to the many others who contributed time, effort and resources to the project:

Jonathan Carlisle, Private Collection

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J. Suplina, graphic design

Michele Urton, New Britain Museum of American Art

Essex Savings Bank, Exhibition Sponsor

Sincerely,

Kathleen Kienholz
Curator



Few people today realize the legacy left by the Ten American Painters group who defied convention and set the stage for "loose" organization and smaller exhibitions in the structured art world of the turn of the century. These artists were nationally recognized for the quality of their work as well as their daring behaviors that enabled them to break with conventions to embrace Impressionism. When a few of these men found their way to Old Lyme, they changed how exhibitions were organized and created what would become an institution to their liking that other New England associations, such as Noank and Gloucester, would later emulate. Childe Hassam and Willard Metcalf were two among the twenty or more artists who took leading roles in the early 1900s colony that was to become the Lyme Art Association.

Our founders were visionaries. They grappled with breathing fresh life into art by use of light and color, as well as maintaining quality, while embracing change. They believed exhibitions should be small and not encumbered by bureaucracy. It comes as no surprise, then, that these same artists were prescient by committing their values to paper in bylaws and legally incorporating the Lyme Art Association in 1914. Of course, it was also a very practical act since incorporation and bylaws were necessary to protect the value of the soon-to-be-built gallery, designed by a leading museum architect and Impressionist painter of the time, Charles A. Platt. Mr. Platt completed this rare example of his shingle-style design (to match the local cottages near the Sound), and our gallery opened its door in 1921. Each new gallery room was designed to display optimally 30 to 40 paintings. Miss Florence Griswold was our first gallery manager. The artists still stayed at her house, but exhibitions were no longer held at the Phoebe-Griffin Library as they had been in the past.

Today, a century later, the Lyme Art Association, The Phoebe-Griffin-Noyes Library, and Miss Florence Griswold's house (reopened as a museum in the mid-twentieth century) still remain active leaders in the cultural community. In 1976, the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts, which began in the sculpture studio at the Lyme Art Association, was founded as an independent institution and is now located further south on Lyme Street. These four nonprofit institutions contribute heavily to the cultural offerings of the shoreline area.

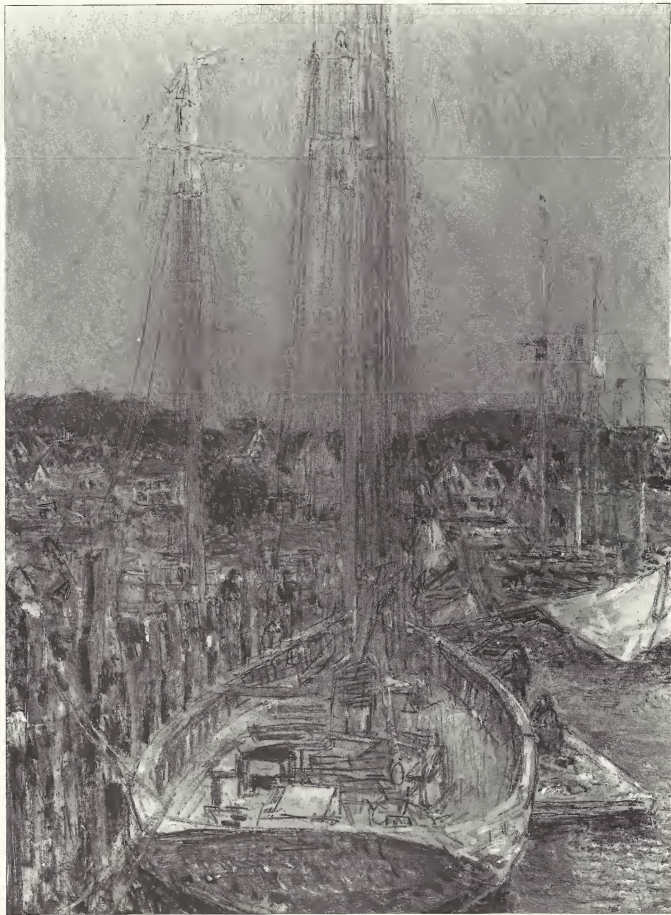
After the gallery was built in 1921, the association continued to attract successive generations of artists who dared revisit American representational art in new refreshing ways without "falling" to the seemingly undisciplined nature of abstract art. In fact, the Lyme Art Association is the oldest continuous summer art colony, now year round, committed to the highly disciplined forms of art.

At a time when many institutions, galleries, and museums were embracing Cubism and modern art through the 1950s and 1960s, the Lyme Art Association maintained a steadfast commitment to representational art with its foundation in classical drawing techniques. Even the most seemingly loose Impressionist painting has classical form and solid drawing at its base. This commitment has proven to be the Lyme Art Association's legacy and blueprint for the future. With fewer and fewer venues dedicated to classical art forms, the Lyme Art Association's mission is unique.

In 1997, we began offering art classes with pastel lessons by Joanne Ballinger and a variety of media for children by Laura Pringle. We have continued those classes with expanded offerings in oil with the Phillipses, landscape with Mary Worthen, and the figure. Classes are being held *en plein air* as well as in our north light studio. Our commitment to the future is to maintain our colony, gallery, salon-style classes and paintings groups for developing and professional working artists. In this vein, life artist member Barbara Ferry has graciously funded the Margaret Cooper - Barbara Ferry Endowment to assure the continuation and independence of the Lyme Art Association in perpetuity.

The mission of the Lyme Art Association is to educate the public on the American representational art forms of the past, present, and future through the continued support and exhibition of works by past and living, working fine artists.

Merja Helen K. Lehtinen
Executive Director



Cillde Hassam (1859-1935)
Boat Landing, Gloucester, 1908
Oil on artist board, 12 1/4 x 9 3/16 in.
Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection (198927)

THE FROM CHILDE HASSAM
ARTISTS OF AND WILLIAM ROBINSON
OLD LYME TO GERSHON CAMASSAR

SELECTIONS FROM THE
NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Any complete study of the American Impressionist movement should consider the contribution made to that movement by Connecticut artists. In the early twentieth century, when American Impressionism flourished, many artists who were based in New York City (where patrons and teaching opportunities were in greatest supply) took advantage of the newly developed railroad network that connected the city with a number of small Connecticut towns. In these towns, particularly in summer, artists found a welcome refuge from urban crowds and a serene, bucolic contrast to the urban landscape in which to develop their work.

The two most significant art colonies in Connecticut during the American Impressionist period were located in Old Lyme and Cos Cob. These towns were particularly attractive to artists because they were located along the shoreline and the main railroad leading out of New York. Many of the Impressionists who traveled to Connecticut had previously been exposed to the informal, stimulating atmosphere of French art colonies in Pont Aven, Grez, and Fountainebleau. In Connecticut they sought to recapture the creative environment fostered by such settings.

Old Lyme, in particular, appealed to the Impressionists because of the hospitality of residents such as Miss Florence Griswold and because of the local scenery and light, which greatly resembled the French countryside. The Old Lyme colony was founded by a group later known as Tonalists, who took their original inspiration from the French Barbizons. Indeed, upon first seeing the area, the painter Henry Ward Ranger declared, "It looks like Barbizon. See the knarled [sic] oaks, the low rolling country." ¹ Ranger's reference was to the French town that during the mid-nineteenth century was home to a school of artists (the Barbizon School) that distinguished itself by artists who painted outdoors, rather than in studios, with fresher colors than their contemporaries. The American Tonalists used similar strategies, painting nature in its most poetic moods - sunrise and sunset - and in the seasons of autumn and springtime. They were to have a significant influence on the American Impressionists, who followed them. The Tonalist colony at Old Lyme, which included artists such as Ranger, Bruce Crane, and Clark Voorhees, however, was short lived.

The focus of the Old Lyme colony turned to Impressionism with the arrival of Childe Hassam in 1903. Already considered one of the pre-eminent artists of his day, Hassam effectively endowed the colony with the sanction of the American artistic establishment. Soon after he arrived at Old Lyme, other resident artists who had devoted themselves to the comparatively somber palette of Tonalism began to produce paintings that featured the brilliant colors and quick brushstrokes that characterized Impressionism. Henry Ward Ranger, in protest against the new style, left Old Lyme and moved farther down the coast to Noank, Connecticut.

Like the Tonalists, the Impressionist artists such as Childe Hassam, Willard Metcalf, and William Robinson

¹ *New Haven Morning Journal and Courier*, July 5, 1907; quoted in Jeffery Andersen, *Old Lyme: The American Barbizon* (Old Lyme: Lyme Historical Society, Florence Griswold Museum, 1982) p. 6.

chose to work out of doors. The picturesque village of Old Lyme offered many vistas and architectural landmarks that caught their interest. The Old Lyme Congregational Church, the Bow Bridge, and the mountain laurel that grew abundantly along the Lieutenant River were motifs frequently painted by the colony artists. The primary goal of the Impressionists was to create an expressive, although undetailed, rendering of the world by carefully representing natural light's effect on objects.

The Impressionists stayed at the run-down neo-classical mansion of Florence Griswold, as the Tonalists had done before them, since it was the center of activity for the colony. Miss Florence Griswold was the last remaining daughter of a proud New England family that had fallen on hard times. Indeed, her finances were so limited that Miss Florence, as she was called, was forced to take in boarders. Yet the success of the Old Lyme art colony was due in no small measure to Miss Florence, who went out of her way to help "her boys," as she called them. She remained in constant debt because her boarding rates were far too low and because she extended credit to resident artists between sales of their paintings. Griswold even set up a hallway gallery in her home in order to sell her boarders' art. She also enjoyed herself immensely. Having lived a quiet life in the country during the prior fifty years, Miss Griswold was more than willing to assume her position as chief benefactress of a lively artists' colony. She even allowed the local artists to paint scenes on door panels and walls throughout the Griswold house, but most particularly in the dining room.

Impressionism brought quite a financial boom to the tiny village. Although the Griswold house was the most desirable location, other homes in the area were also rented by visiting artists. Not only did residents charge for room and board, but they also allowed the artists to portray their fields and livestock for a fee. Unusual looking portable studios could be spotted in many a farmer's field throughout Lyme. Although necessary for carrying canvases, paint, and turpentine, the sketching gear of an artist was a strange sight to behold in a quiet colonial town. Despite such oddities, the villagers were mainly tolerant of the newcomers and welcomed the economic prosperity that accompanied them. Local residents, for example, were particularly glad to host the summer school of the Art Students League of New York, which was centered in Old Lyme from 1904 to 1906. In contrast, the many professional artists who had congregated in Old Lyme were less than pleased to have a number of amateurs in their midst. Consequently, the school soon moved to Woodstock, New York, a more receptive environment.

By 1914, Old Lyme was one of the most highly acclaimed art colonies in the United States and its summer exhibitions captured national attention. Many artists remained there permanently, and the town became a popular destination for collectors and art critics. The original members of the colony who remained in Old Lyme formally incorporated as the Lyme Art Association in 1914. Beginning in 1902, the members staged summer exhibitions at the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library on Main Street. However, due to the national exposure of the colony, plans were immediately put in place to build a gallery for the annual summer exhibitions.

The land, purchased from Florence Griswold in 1917, was adjacent to her mansion on Lyme Street. Designed by Charles A. Platt, who also built the Freer Gallery in Washington, DC, the building was created for natural light to illuminate the works of art. It is a rare example of shingle-style architecture by Platt. Finished in 1921, it was America's first self-financed gallery built by the artists themselves.

An examination of the landscape of Old Lyme as portrayed in the paintings of the artists who spent their summers in Lyme, reveals the absence of paintings of the seashore. The village of Old Lyme is very near the coast, yet none of the artists chose to paint the Sound, even though it is known that they frequented the beach. Although most of the beaches of Old Lyme were private at this time, Miss Florence allowed her artists access to Griswold Point, the family beach. Further proof is offered in a 1903 letter from Child Hassam to fellow Impressionist J. Alden Weir in which he wrote: "Summer is moving on apace — with long leaps, in fact. I am working and swimming every day in the clean ocean."²

The lack of interest in seascapes is most likely due to the fact that the founders of the colony, such as Henry Ward Ranger, preferred the dense interior woodlands as subject matter and that later artists simply followed their lead. Also, Old Lyme artists generally followed prescribed stylistic preferences of the American Impressionists, who did not feature coastal scenes, per se, in their art.³ The persistent themes of the Old Lyme artists were the tidal marshes that surrounded the area, the mountain laurel (the Connecticut state flower), the forested areas of the region, the Lieutenant River that flowed behind the Griswold House, the Bow Bridge spanning the Lieutenant River, the Old Lyme Congregational Church, the Florence Griswold House and other houses in the area, and their gardens. Indeed, the Old Lyme paintings were quite popular. After works produced in Old Lyme began to sell at extremely high prices in New York, one critic commented that artists traveling to Lyme could be equated with the gold hunters of 1849 in their move to California.⁴ Yet, in spite of a similarity in subjects chosen by these artists, there is an underlying selectivity, quite premeditated, in fact. They picked sites, not just for their proximity (for certainly the shoreline was nearby), but for their suitability. Depicting the same subjects gave the colony a sense of a cohesive artistic identity. Scenes that were less than picturesque, such as Florence Griswold's dilapidated mansion, were improved beyond recognition, thus adhering to the aesthetics of American Impressionism and presenting a picturesque and charming view of the typical New England village.

Kathleen Kienholz

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² Child Hassam to J. Alden Weir, August 12, 1903. Hassam file. Archives of the Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, Connecticut.

³ The argument was first suggested by William H. Gerdts in his essay, "East Hampton, Old Lyme and the Art Colony Movement," in Gerdts and Andersen, *En Plein Air: The Art Colonies at East Hampton and Old Lyme, 1880-1930*, 1989, p. 18.

⁴ Willard Metcalf Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. dD C. (Reel N70-15, frame 510)



Guy Carleton Wiggins (1883-1962)

Road to the Wood, 1925

Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.

Grace Judd Landers Fund (193901)

New Britain Museum of American Art

OLD LYME ARTISTS IN THE
COLLECTION OF THE NEW BRITAIN
MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

The New Britain Museum of American Art, founded in 1903, has one of the most comprehensive collections of American art in the country. Its holdings include not only nationally known artists, but also those who lived and worked in Connecticut. Over the years, the museum has acquired a superb collection of American Tonalist and Impressionist art, including many works by the artists of Old Lyme.

One such artist is Willard Metcalf, whose canvas *Mountain Laurel* portrays the flower in full bloom along the shores of the Lieutenant River in Old Lyme. Often depicted by the Old Lyme colonists, the flora was well known even as far away as Boston: "At Flying Point, on the Lieutenant River, is a wonderful clump of the mountain laurels, and last season was unusually favorable for the growth of these beautiful plants." While countless artists of Old Lyme painted the flower, Metcalf created a masterpiece.

Childe Hassam is also well represented in the New Britain collection. One notable work is *The Dragon Cloud, Old Lyme*, executed in 1903, Hassam's first year at the colony. The focal point of the work is a curiously shaped cloud that dominates the skyline of Old Lyme and is painted in Hassam's distinctive Impressionist style, a dazzling display of broken brushwork and sparkling color.

In addition to his painting, Hassam began making prints while staying at the Cos Cob art colony in Greenwich, Connecticut (south of Old Lyme along the coastline). Examples of his prints in the New Britain collection include representations of Gloucester, Massachusetts; Easthampton, New York, where Hassam spent his later years; and New York City, where he mainly resided. *Fifth Avenue, Noon, New York*, shows a view looking north up Fifth Avenue, a precursor of the famous flag paintings. Hassam was often called the "Marco Polo" of the Impressionists because of his frequent travels throughout New England.

Another noted Old Lyme artist in the New Britain collection is Walter Griffin. Although not well known before coming to Old Lyme, Griffin achieved great commercial success in his years at the colony. In his *Old Lyme Landscape*, ca. 1903-4, we see the soft, muted palette of Tonalism, a style derived from French Barbizon influences. However, Griffin wholly embraced Impressionism in 1907 under the influence of Childe Hassam.

Bruce Crane was also an original member of the Old Lyme artist colony. Although he first came to Old Lyme in 1902, it was in 1919 that he began to exhibit there. *The Cider Mill*, at first glance, appears to be a painted sketch for a later work due to its small size and painterly quality. However, its careful consideration of somber harmonies distinguish it as a finished Tonalist painting.

Frank Vincent DuMond first went to Old Lyme in 1902 to direct the summer school of the Art Students League of New York. The school, however, closed due the animosity of the professional artists towards the large number of students in the village. DuMond stayed on and gave private lessons in Old Lyme. Between the world wars, he taught summer sessions in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where he engaged in fly fishing. Here he painted *Fishing, Margaree River*.

Allen Butler Talcott, a native of Hartford, Connecticut, first came to Old Lyme in 1901. After receiving a degree from Trinity College in Hartford in 1890, he studied at the Art Students League in New York and, in Paris, under Benjamin Constant. Talcott's *Barberry Field* shows a bramble-covered hillside with a distinctive New England stone wall cutting across it. This work shows Talcott's concern for carefully capturing the local landscape. Talcott was one of the artists who stayed with Florence Griswold at her mansion, and his letters reflect his high regard for her: "Some good spirit brought me to your door," he wrote.¹

A particularly striking work in the New Britain collection is by Guy Carleton Wiggins. Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1883, Wiggins held strong ties to that city throughout his life, yet he also loved the countryside, due to his extended stays in Old Lyme. *Road to the Wood*, of 1925, is a heavily impastoed painting of a fall landscape. The exquisite fall colors of rust and brown of the foreground contrast with the blue and purple trees in the background, yet the painting is not disjointed. Wiggins combines these dissonances into a unified and remarkable work of art. It is most likely of the landscape around Old Lyme, for Wiggins moved there in 1920 to be near the art colony that his father, Carleton Wiggins helped establish.

Chauncey Ryder exhibited with the Lyme artists' group in both 1910 and 1911, staying at Florence Griswold's house during that time. He was afforded the honor of painting a panel in the Griswold home, a rare privilege. His evocative painting, *Winter Landscape*, shows snow-covered hills and a faint view of a red barn in the distance. The scene appears to be covered with a veil of falling snow which renders all the details as seen through a vaporous haze.

Roger Dennis, born in Norwich, Connecticut, in 1902, studied with some of the famed members of the Old Lyme art colony, including Guy Wiggins and Frank Bicknell. He often painted the local landscape at different times of the day and in different seasons of the year. His love of nature is present in his wash drawing, *Niantic River and Bay*, of 1958, in which he documents the waterway of Niantic, Connecticut. Dennis joined the Lyme Art Association in 1940 and was also head of the Lyman Allyn Museum's conservation department for thirty-three years, bringing his painting expertise to the field of restoration.

Nelson C. White, born in Waterford, Connecticut, in 1900, was the son of Henry C. White, a prominent artist. In fact, the Whites of Waterford have been producing paintings, mostly landscapes of the Connecticut shoreline, for over one hundred years. Surrounded by art from his earliest years, and trained by his father, Nelson C. White went on to study at the National Academy of Design in New York from 1920 to 1924. Traveling widely throughout his career, he spent much time in Italy, his wife's native country. It was there that he created *The Fishing Fleet, Viareggio*, 1958, which shows his facility with marine painting.

The family tradition continues with Nelson H. White, who brings both an American and an international perspective to his aesthetic. Trained in Italy under the famous teacher Nerina Simi and the great Florentine master Pietro Annigoni, White spends part of each year in Florence, where he maintains a studio. The combination of his American heritage and the rigorous training of his Italian years brings a unique vigor to his paintings. In *Port of Nice, France*, 1977, White displays his virtuosity with paint, capturing the brilliant colors of the south of France.

¹ Letter from Allen Butler Talcott to Florence Griswold, Thanksgiving Day, 1901, Florence Griswold Papers, Lyme Historical Society.



Chauncey Foster Ryder (1868-1949)

Winter Landscape, n.d.

Oil on canvas, 20 1/4 x 30 1/4 in.

Gift of the Estate of Miss Frances Whittlesley (1972.32)

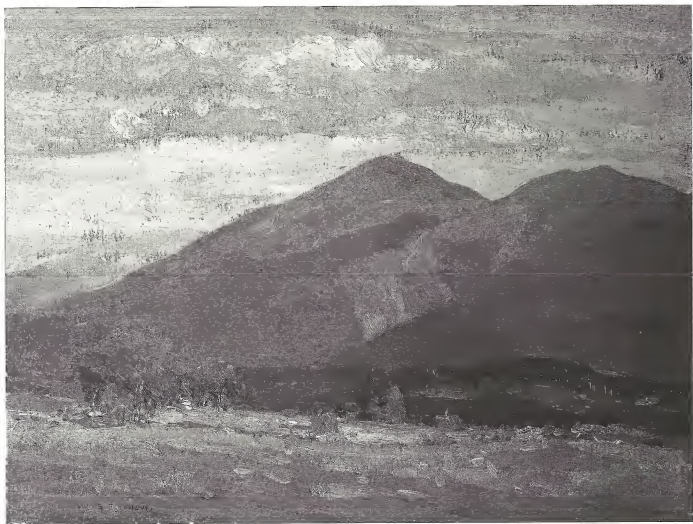
New Britain Museum of American Art



Allen Butler Yalcott (1867-1908)
"Barberry Field, Lyme, Connecticut," n.d.
Oil on canvas, 22 x 32 in.
John Butler Yalcott Fund (1913/1)

C H E C K L I S T O F W O R K S F R O M T H E
N E W B R I T A I N M U S E U M O F A M E R I C A N A R T

- 1 **Bruce Crane** (1857-1937)
The Cider Mill, n.d.
Oil on canvas board, 8 x 10 in.
Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection (198919)
- 2 **Roger Dennis** (b. 1902)
Niantic River and Bay, 1958
Ink and wash on tan paper, 15 3/8 x 22 1/2 in.
Friends Purchase Fund (1982.73)
- 3 **Frank Vincent Dumond** (1865-1951)
Fishing, Margaree River, 1935
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.
John Butler Talcott Fund (1973.93)
- 4 **Walter Griffin** (1861-1935)
Old Lyme Landscape, ca. 1902-4
Oil on board, 8 x 12 in.
Gift of Dr. Jeffrey Blau (1981.140)
- 5 **Walter Griffin** (1861-1935)
The Tranquil Tree, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.
Gift of John C. E. Taylor (1971.35)
- 6 **Walter Griffin** (1861-1935)
Autumn, Trees and Cottage, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 18 x 23 3/4 in.
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Blau (1982.82)
- 7 **Childe Hassam** (1859-1935)
The Dragon Cloud, Old Lyme, 1903
Oil on canvas on board, 15 1/4 x 19 1/4 in.
Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection (1989.26)
- 8 **Childe Hassam** (1859-1935)
In The Surf, East Hampton, 1921
Etching, 8 3/4 x 6 1/8 in.
Gift of Alix W. Stanley Estate (1954.76)
- 9 **Childe Hassam** (1859-1935)
Boat Landing, Gloucester, 1918
Oil on artist board, 12 1/4 x 9 3/16 in.
Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection (1989.27)
- 10 **Childe Hassam** (1859-1935)
End of the Court, Gloucester, 1918
Lithograph, 9 3/4 x 11 1/2 in.
Gift of Dr. C. J. Robertson (1957.27)
- 11 **Childe Hassam** (1859-1935)
Return of the Fleet, 1918
Lithograph on paper, 9 5/8 x 14 3/8 in.
Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection (1989.23)
- 12 **Childe Hassam** (1859-1935)
Fifth Avenue, Noon, 1916
Etching on paper, 9 15/16 x 7 3/16 in.
Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection (1989.24)
- 13 **Willard Metcalf** (1858-1925)
Mountain Laurel, 1905
Oil on canvas, 29 x 26 in.
Charles and Elizabeth Buchanan Collection (1989.36)
- 14 **Willard Metcalf** (1858-1925)
Landing at Egg Rock in Frenchman's Bay, ca. 1896
Watercolor and gouache on toned paper, 11 3/4 x 18 1/2 in.
Harriet Russell Stanley Fund (1954.45)
- 15 **Chauncey Foster Ryder** (1868-1949)
Winter Landscape, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 20 1/4 x 30 1/4 in.
Gift of the Estate of Miss Frances Whittlesey (1972.32)
- 16 **Allen Butler Talcott** (1867-1908)
Barberry Field, Lyme, Connecticut, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 22 x 32 in.
John Butler Talcott Fund (1913.01)
- 17 **Nelson Cooke White** (1900-1989)
The Fishing Fleet, Viareggio, 1958
Oil on panel, 12 x 17 in.
Gift of the Artist (1979.078)
- 18 **Nelson Holbrook White** (b. 1932)
Port of Nice, France, 1977
Oil on board, 7 1/4 x 10 3/4 in.
Friends Purchase Fund (1979.083)
- 19 **Guy Carleton Wiggins** (1883-1962)
Road to the Wood, 1925
Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.
Grace Judd Landers Fund (1936.01)



William Robinson

New Hampshire - August 3, 1924

Oil on panel, 8 x 10 in.

Kenneth L. Austin and F. Jane Austin Collection

T H E L A N D S C A P E S

O F W I L L I A M R O B I N S O N

William Robinson, a native of East Gloucester, Massachusetts, attended the Massachusetts Normal School in Boston in his youth! He then traveled to Paris to study with Benjamin Constant and Jules Lefebvre at the Académie Julian. In spite of his early academic training in the figure, he became known for his paintings of landscapes, particularly the hillsides and pasturelands of Old Lyme.

From 1905 until 1920 Robinson spent every summer at the Florence Griswold mansion in Old Lyme. He often worked across the brook from the Lyme Art Association. One of the founding members of that organization, he was later elected its president. His attachment to Old Lyme was such that he became a permanent resident of the town from 1921 until 1937, the year that Florence Griswold died. He stayed, of course, at the Florence Griswold mansion during those years, and it might have been too painful for the artist to return after Miss Florence's death. He lived in his later years in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he died in 1945. The 23 works included in this exhibition have not been shown publicly since then, when they were acquired by Kenneth Austin's mother from the artist and his estate. They belong to Kenneth L. and F. Jane Austin. There are 90 paintings in the Austin family collection originally acquired by the senior Mrs. Austin.

The works in the present exhibition depict the hillside of Old Lyme as it was in the beginning of the twentieth century, full of fields and farms, without the dense forestland that covers it today. The landscapes show the typical fall colors and somber palette of the Barbizon-influenced style of Tonalism. Robinson's work was extremely well received in his lifetime. He won many awards, including honorable mentions at the Paris Exposition of 1900 and the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, in 1901. He also received a silver medal at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.

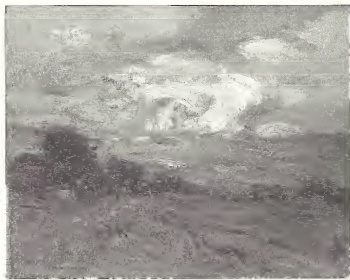
¹ For further reading see catalogue essay on William Robinson in *Connecticut and American Impressionism*, (Ed. Cat. Storrs, CT: The William Benton Museum of Art, the University of Connecticut, 1980) p171.

William Robinson

Lowchester NH - August 18, 1933, 1933

Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.

Kenneth L. Austin and F. Jane Austin Collection



William Robinson

Uplands, Arville NY - August, 1904, 1904

Oil on panel, 7 1/4 x 9 3/8 in.

Kenneth L. Austin and F. Jane Austin Collection

William Robinson

Glasgow c. 1932

Oil on panel, 10 x 12 in.

Kenneth L. Austin and F. Jane Austin Collection



William Robinson

Morrisport Island, Maine - August 17, 1932

Oil on panel, 10 x 12 in.

Kenneth L. Austin and F. Jane Austin Collection



William Robinson

Old Lyme - Trees in Bloom, 1921

Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.

Kenneth L. Austin and E. Jane Austin Collection

C H E C K L I S T O F W O R K S B Y W I L L I A M R O B I N S O N F R O M T H E
P R I V A T E C O L L E C T I O N O F K E N N E T H L . A N D F . J A N E A U S T I N

- 1 *Lancaster NH - August 18, 1933, 1933*
Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.
- 2 *Etaples France - 1899, 1899*
Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.
- 3 *Fields and Mountains, 1924*
Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.
- 4 *Old Lyme Conn. - September 1906, 1906*
Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.
- 5 *Old Lyme - Trees in Bloom, 1921*
Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.
- 6 *Etaples France - Summer 1899, 1899*
Oil on panel, 12 x 16 in.
- 7 *Dark Trees, n.d.*
Oil on wood, 13 3/4 x 10 3/8 in.
- 8 *Biloxi, Miss - January 15, 1935, 1935*
Oil on panel, 10 x 12 in.
- 9 *Gloucester Mass n.d.*
Oil on panel, 10 x 12 in.
- 10 *Monhegan Island, Maine - August 17, 1932, 1932*
Oil on panel, 10 x 12 in.
- 11 *Gloucester Mass n.d.*
Oil on panel, 10 x 12 in.
- 12 *Williamsburg, Va - March 29, 1935, 1935*
Oil on panel, 10 x 12 in.
- 13 *Arkville, NY - Summer 1905, 1905*
Oil on panel, 9 x 12 in.
- 14 *Intervale, NH - August 3, 1924, 1924*
Oil on panel, 8 x 10 in.
- 15 *Hamburg, Connecticut - July, 1910, 1910*
Oil on panel, 8 x 10 in.
- 16 *New Hampshire Mountains, Concord - 1921, 1921*
Oil on panel, 8 x 10 in.
- 17 *Hills and Mountains, n.d.*
Oil on panel, 8 x 10 in.
- 18 *Arkville, NY - July 28, 1919, 1919*
Oil on panel, 8 x 10 in.
- 19 *Mt. Washington Near Los Angeles, California - February, 1911, 1911*
Oil on panel, 8 x 10 in.
- 20 *Evening Skies, 1904, 1904*
Oil on panel, 7 1/4 x 9 3/8 in.
- 21 *Uplands, Arkville, NY - August, 1904, 1904*
Oil on panel, 7 1/4 x 9 3/8 in.
- 22 *Lyme - October 1905, 1905*
Oil on panel, 7 1/4 x 9 3/8 in.
- 23 *Lyme - November 1908, 1908*
Oil on panel, 7 1/4 x 9 3/8 in.

C H E C K L I S T O F W O R K S F R O M P R I V A T E C O L L E C T I O N S

- 1 Carleton Wiggins, *Cows in the Pasture, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 12 x 18 in.
Marsh Family Collection
- 2 Carleton Wiggins, *Sheep in the Field, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 24 x 26 in.
Marsh Family Collection
- 3 William Robinson, *Mountain Laurel, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.
Marsh Family Collection
- 4 Gifford Beal, *Plowing the Field, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in.
Marsh Family Collection
- 5 William Howe Foote, *Portrait of Helen Pierson, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 15 x 12 in.
Marsh Family Collection
- 6 Henry Rankin Poore, *Spoke, 1910*
Oil on canvas, 12 x 16 in.
Beardsley Family Collection
- 7 Henry Rankin Poore, *Bridge in Old Lyme with Mrs. Beardsley, 1906*
Oil on canvas, 16 x 20 in.
Beardsley Family Collection
- 8 Henry Rankin Poore, *Beach at Griswold Point, 1906*
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in.
Beardsley Family Collection
- 9 Edward Rook, *Birch Trees, c. 1910*
Oil on canvas, 15 x 16 in.
Beardsley Family Collection
- 10 Roger Dennis, *Flag Day, New London, 1930 c. 1930*
Oil on canvas, 24 x 20 in.
Jonathan Carlisle, Private Collection
- 11 Edgar O. Miner, *Haystacks, Winter, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 8 x 10 in.
Jonathan Carlisle, Private Collection
- 12 Margaret M. Cooper, *Nassau Harbor, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 11 x 14 in.
Jonathan Carlisle, Private Collection
- 13 Guy C. Wiggins, *Wall Street in Winter, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 12 x 16 in.
Private Collection
- 14 Guy C. Wiggins, *North Pier, Noank, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 8 x 10 in.
Private Collection
- 15 Charles Ebert, *Lobster Shanty, Monhegan, n.d.*
Oil on canvas, 14 x 18 in.
Private Collection



Gershon Camassari
Street in Moodus, Connecticut, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 21 x 24 in.
Private Collection

G E R S H O N C A M A S S A R
I N R E T R O S P E C T (1 9 0 8 - 1 9 9 5)

If Gershon Camassar had not been such an excellent painter, he could have made a living as a story teller. Renowned for his tales of the artists he had known in the Old Lyme art colony, Camassar could talk for hours about the various personalities. He and his brother Arthur (Abe) were co-owners of Brater's, a New London framing and arts supply business. It was there that Camassar would regale customers with stories of the artists he knew personally. Childe Hassam, William Chadwick, Will Howe Foote, and Harry Hoffman were just a few of the painters he knew well.

Those artists were very influential on Camassar's individual style of painting. In the evenings and on weekends when he was away from the store, he would be constantly painting. In contrast to his garrulous personality, his quiet paintings subtly and delicately captured the fall and winter landscapes that he loved. Camassar often painted on overcast days, eschewing colorful, sunny ones because they were too "Kodachrome."¹ Indeed, a perfect "Gersh" (Camassar's nickname to all who knew him well) day was one in which the delicate colors of leaves and trees could be captured by gray and brown with subtle touches of white and pink and one could see "the spines of the trees."²

Never an enthusiastic traveler, Camassar remained close to home and painted the Connecticut woodlands that he loved. Born in Columbia, Connecticut, in 1908, he moved to New London and remained in the coastal area until his death at age eighty-seven in Waterford.

Although mostly self-taught, Camassar was greatly influenced by the work of his lifelong friend, Robert Brackman, the well known portraitist who resided in Noank. Lars Thorsen, a noted marine painter, also took an interest in Camassar's work.³ Besides these contemporaries, Camassar would spend hours in museums studying artists he admired, particularly Camille Pissarro.

A member of the Lyme Art Association, Camassar exhibited in that group's annual shows as well as at the Mystic Art Association and at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford. Camassar worked primarily in oils but also produced pastels of extraordinary color. He felt that oils were the most flexible and that pastels were the easiest to execute. In discussing his art in a 1971 interview with the *New London Day*, Camassar stated, "Painting is seeing something through emotion and being moved enough to give it an art interpretation. You have to put yourself into it. Painting never gets easier, it becomes more difficult because you want to put more into each new painting."⁴

¹ Author's interview with Arlene Camassar Mandel, September 5, 1998.

² *Ibid.*

³ Ann R. Nye, "Gershon Camassar," in *Mendocino, Mendocino, Sea and Sky – A Retrospective of Five Artists*, Edith Car Waterford Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater Center, 1993, unpaginated.

⁴ Sue MacGillivray, "Artist Says Talent Inherent," *New London Day*, March 23, 1970, p. 2.

Gershon Camassar
Foreyard with Sheep, n.d.
 Watercolor, 8 1/2 x 12 3/4 in.
 Private Collection



Gershon Camassar
Grey Day in Salem, n.d.
 Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.
 Private Collection

Gershon Camassat
Les Chis Farm, n.d.
 Oil on canvas, 14 x 18 in.
 Private Collection



Gershon Camassat
The Pasture, n.d.
 Pastel, 7 1/2 x 10 1/2 in.
 Private Collection



Gershon Camassar
Looking Toward Main Street on Winthrop, n.d.
 Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.
 Private Collection

CHECKLIST OF WORKS BY GERSHON CAMASSAR

- 1 *Autumn Glow*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 12 x 16 in.
Private Collection
- 2 *Grey Day in Salem*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.
Private Collection
- 3 *The Hay Wagon*, n.d.
Pastel, 12 x 16 in.
Private Collection
- 4 *Snow Patches*, n.d.
Pastel, 15 x 23 in.
Private Collection
- 5 *Farm Yard in Winter*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 13 1/2 x 17 1/2 in.
Private Collection
- 6 *Hill Street, New London*, n.d.
Pastel, 7 x 9 in.
Private Collection
- 7 *Farmyard with Sheep*, n.d.
Watercolor, 8 1/2 x 12 3/4 in.
Private Collection
- 8 *Looking Toward Main Street on Winthrop*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30
Private Collection
- 9 *Len Otis Farm*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 14 x 18 in.
Private Collection
- 10 *Late November*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 17 1/2 x 21 1/2 in.
Private Collection
- 11 *Bozrah, Connecticut*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 8 x 10 in.
Private Collection
- 12 *Snow Scene*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 30 x 36 in.
Private Collection
- 13 *Route One, Old Mystic*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 5 1/4 x 7 1/4 in.
Lyme Art Association,
Permanent Collection
Gift of Nathan and Patricia Shippee A.1998
- 14 *Afternoon - North Stonington*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 13 x 17 in.
Private Collection
- 15 *Snow Falling*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 10 3/4 x 13 3/4 in.
Private Collection
- 16 *Street in Moodus, Connecticut*, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 21 x 24
Private Collection
- 17 *The Pasture*, n.d.
Pastel, 7 1/2 x 10 1/2 in.
Private Collection
- 18 *Boats in the Harbor*, 1929
Ink on paper, 7 1/2 x 10 3/4 in.
Private Collection
- 19 *Landscape Sketch*, n.d.
Ink on paper, 10 3/4 x 14 3/4 in.
Private Collection
- 20 *Landscape with Barns in Foreground*, n.d.
Ink on paper, 10 3/4 x 14 3/4 in.
Private Collection
- 21 *Houses and Barns*, n.d.
Ink on paper, 9 x 12 in.
Private Collection

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

THIS CATALOGUE WAS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF THE
LYME ART ASSOCIATION AND THE NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Merja Helen K. Lehtinen is the Executive Director of the Lyme Art Association. A writer and management consultant in Manhattan and Connecticut, she has over twenty years experience in management and founding of nonprofit organizations and serves on various boards of charitable organizations. She has worked on the staff of the United States Senate. Miss Lehtinen taught marketing for executives at the Graduate Center of City University of New York and the New York Society of Association Executives. She has covered the arts, art history, business, and technology for national magazines as editor-in-chief and a writer. Educated in the United States and Europe, where she studied art history, government, and philology, she is a native New Yorker and Connecticut resident. Lehtinen was elected to Who's Who in America and Who's Who in American Women for her work in management and journalism. Norwich Free Academy, Norwich, CT; Goethe Schule Gymnasium, Germany; Dartmouth College, Mount Holyoke College, BA; Trinity College, University of Helsinki, Graduate School Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Graduate Certificate.

Kathleen Kienholz is an art historian and served as curator of the exhibition for the Lyme Art Association. Previously she has lectured at the LAA on the origins of the colony. She specializes in New England art colonies. Presently working on her Ph.D. at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York where she is studying with acclaimed American art historian William H. Gerdts, Ms. Kienholz is the archivist at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York as well as adjunct professor of art history at the State University of New York at New Paltz. A native of Norwich, Connecticut, she now resides in New York City. She was formerly with Christie's Auction House in London, the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice, the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, and the National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts, New York. Norwich Free Academy, Norwich, CT; Smith College, BA, Hunter College, M.A., doctoral program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Laurene Buckley is the Director and Curator of the New Britain Museum of American Art. Her Ph.D. in American Art was earned at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Sixteen years of museum experience includes her last position as Assistant Director for Curatorial Affairs and Chief Curator of the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, New York. She is the author of numerous exhibition catalogues, articles, and books, including *Joseph DeCamp: Master Painter of the Boston School*. Her memberships include the Association of Independent Art Historians, the College Art Association, the Archives of American Art, and the American Association of Museums. She is a 1997 graduate of the Getty Leadership Institute for Museums. Buckley's community activities include board membership in the Consortium of New England Community Art Museums, the Greater New Britain Arts Alliance, the Connecticut Advocates for the Arts, and Leadership New Britain. She recently served as a peer reviewer for the National Institute of Museum and Library Services and for Connecticut's Commission on the Arts.

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